



*Saint Louis Audubon*

*Bulletin*

January, 1966

Vol. 34, No. 2

**COMING EVENTS INCLUDE  
LECTURES**

Friday, February 4, 1966  
Third Baptist Church — 8:15 p. m.

**C. P. LYONS**

***“Mexican Adventure”***

Few countries on earth can match the diversity of terrain and climate, and the richness of flora and fauna of Mexico. Snow-capped peaks, smoking volcanoes, deep canyons, thick jungles, and sunny beaches provide dramatic settings for an exciting “field trip” with naturalist Chess Lyons. Local inhabitants include the cactus wren, motmot, coatimundi, boa constrictor and many other fascinating animals. From mountain top to the edge of the sea, here is a land of beauty and contrast, presented in color by an expert photographer.

Friday, February 25, 1966  
Clayton High School — 8:15 p. m.

**FRANK W. McLAUGHLIN**

***“A Wonderland Endangered”***

Once a natural wonderland, New Jersey is now the most densely populated state in America. Naturalist Frank McLaughlin takes viewers through the remaining wild areas of this native state, revealing its wealth of animal life and unique plants. The pileated woodpecker, opossum, spade-foot toad and spotted turtle are shown; also the curly grass fern, pyxie moss and native wild orchids. A beautiful film with an important message for all who treasure our natural wonderlands.

(Continued)

Tuesday, March 29, 1966  
Third Baptist Church — 8:15 p. m.

## **ALFRED M. BAILEY**

### ***"Mormonland Highlights"***

Utah, the land of the Mormons, is one of the most colorful of all western states. Dr. Alfred M. Bailey of Denver, Colorado, has photographed from the deep canyons of the south to the mountain tops of the north. View beautiful autumn foliage and swift flowing streams. Visit mule deer, porcupines, martens and raccoons in their native habitats. A strikingly beautiful film, skillfully narrated by a renowned naturalist.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Sat., Feb. 19 — American Bald Eagle Survey, Clarksville, Mo. (see announcement).

Sun., Feb. 13 and Sun., March 13—Busch Wildlife Area, monthly bird census led by Webster Groves Nature Study Society. 8 a. m. at area's headquarters.

Sat., Feb. 19, Sun, Feb. 27, Sat., March 19 and Sun., March 27, Shaw's Garden Arboretum, Gray Summit, Mo., led by St. Louis Audubon Society. 8 a. m. at main gate.

In our next issue we will announce the date of a nature workshop to be given in the spring by Louis Brenner of the Webster Groves Park Dept., formerly associated with the Missouri Botanical Gardens.

## **1965 "200 CLUB" MEMBERS**

By EARL COMFORT

There was exciting and pleasant birding aplenty in the St. Louis area in 1965, resulting in a composite score of 280 species recorded within a 50 mile city radius. The 15 "200 Club" birders with 200 or more local species also upped by one those of the previous year. The diligent listers in the select circle were high man, Steve Hanselmann, with 252 species; Dr. Ralph Laffey, 246; Dick Anderson, 245; Kathryn Arhos, 242; Bob Guenther, 234; Earl Hath, 227 Don Hays, 220; John Willetts, 218; Diane Eger, 213; Jack Van Benthuyssen, 204; Mildred Anderson, 203; Mike Flieg, 203; Earl Comfort, 202 and Helen Hill, 200. Because Henrietta Lammert lost her list she was unable to furnish the exact figures above 200. Helen and Henrietta are new "Club" members.



## WINTER BIRDS IN THE ST. LOUIS AREA

By J. EARL COMFORT

Members of the finch family furnished our most exciting local birding during our late fall and early winter season with such rarities as evening grosbeak, redpoll, white-winged crossbill and clay-colored sparrow making the lists of some of our lucky diligent bird watchers. In addition, there was an epidemic of the rather rare pine siskins. The grosbeak find is credited to Sally Vasse, who located two of these colorful birds in the Calhoun County, Ill. Swan Lake area on November 1st. The redpoll was carefully checked by Kathryn Arhos in a St. Louis County cemetery on December 8th. The white-winged crossbill listing was by Catherine Simon in Jersey County, Ill. near Pere Marquette Park during the first week in December.

An envious listing was a golden eagle seen by Steve Hanselman near the August A. Busch Wildlife Area on December 8th.

Earl Hath found our first glaucous gull of the winter on the Mississippi River below his bluff cabin near Pevely, Mo.

Complete 1965 reports show an impressive composite bird list (within a radius of 50 miles from St. Louis and in St. Louis proper) totaling 280 species. This topped the 1964 listing by 1 species. There was a tie between warblers and members of the finch family with 36 species each, followed by the shorebirds with 29. There were 21 kinds of ducks and 20 from the hawk and allied families.

There were two exceptionally rare species found, a Sabine's gull and a poor-will, the former seen near the Alton Dam on September 12th by Dick Anderson. The poor-will is credited to Earl Hath, who first heard its call early in May near his cabin. He shared his find with Connie Hath and Paul and Helen Miller, the quartet tuning in on its repeated calls on several occasions thereafter as it "sang" near the Hath and Miller summer cabins near Pevely, Mo. Some other rare listings in 1965 were horned grebes, eared grebe, cattle egret, whistling swan, white-winged scoter, black vulture, Mississippi kite, goshawk, peregrine falcon, sandhill crane, yellow rail, American knot, Hudsonian godwit, fish crow, yellow-headed blackbird, and Smith's longspur.

Some migrants listed recently which should be wintering far south of us in the dead of winter were pied-billed grebe, wood duck, killdeer, snipe, dunlin, phoebe, hermit thrush, brown thrasher, Bewick's wren, ruby-crowned kinglet, myrtle warbler, orange-crowned warbler and dickcissel.

# LIFETIME OF A ROOKERY

By JUDSON McCUNE DUDLEY

Louisiana, Mo.

A shove on the pushpole and the canoe slides further through the mass of American lotus. The acres of marsh vegetation, the hummocks of undergrowth, the occasional large trees are reminiscent of the pirogue trails of the Gulf Coast, but the scene is between Clarksville and Louisiana, Missouri. Sora rails and gallinules are calling everywhere. At the next push, a Florida gallinule rises awkwardly to the delight of Rachel, my six-year old daughter, who is in the bow, wearing a lotus leaf as a floppy sun hat. Another shove, and the canoe emerges into an open lead. As we crouch low, a wood duck convoys her new brood out of sight. A great blue heron starts, but decides not to leave, and a muskrat continues its journey on the surface. The wind is right to drift us across the open water. A little cautious sculling guides the canoe into a mud bank to make a steady photography platform.



*Cormorants at Rookery Photographed by the Author*

Overhead in the skeletons of some dead cottonwoods is a rookery of double crested cormorants (*Phalacrocorax Auritus Aritus*), one of perhaps three dozen breeding colonies of this sub-species in the United States. It is late summer and the birds have completed the pre-basic moult and are in basic definitive plumage, except the crests have not been replaced. The bright colors of the loreal skin and gular pouch have faded. Most of the young are flying, but there are some nests still active, perhaps second broods. The starting of the big telephoto lens seems to upset the birds more than our few cautious movements. Some fly, dropping almost to the water before becoming really airborne, but they soon return.

Pictures taken, we have time for reflection.

This is not a traditional site, but a result of flooding by the Navigation Dam No. 24 at Clarksville. Cormorants require cliffs or dead trees immediately adjacent to reasonably clear water for fishing, and these water killed trees and still marsh were ideal. A colony started in 1940, but the end of the colony is already in sight. The trees are falling, and the marsh is the victim of the urbanization and industrialization of our country. A barge facility, with its attendant loading structures, wires and activity is being constructed adjacent to the rookery. It will be interesting to see if the cormorants will adapt to the new situation.

This marsh makes an excellent study in ecology, habitat and environment control and adaptability.

# **EAGLES — EAGLES — EAGLES**

## **EXCITING FIRSTS**

by HENRIETTA LAMMERT

We had two very interesting field trips at the Audubon National Convention in Boston the first week of October. The first was to the Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary, Plum Island, and the Newburyport area. We had a long list of land, shore, and sea birds but the high point of the day was the buffbreasted sandpipers which was a "first" for most of us.

The Narragansett-Newport trip led by Richard Cadbury was a wonderful day in spite of the weather — in the thirties — and the high winds. At the Norman Bird Sanctuary, Middletown R. I. Robert Woodruff, the sanctuary naturalist, showed us the first fulmar ever recorded in Rhode Island. The fulmar had been blown in on the storm several days before and had been picked up on the beach in an utterly exhausted state. Mr. Woodruff had been resting and feeding it and felt that it was ready to fly again. He released it on the beach and off it flew in the high wind. Within a hundred yards it was attacked by a large flock of gulls but it eluded them and we hope soon found other fulmars.

On Saturday, February 19, the St. Louis Audubon Society will participate in the National Audubon Society's winter census of the American Bald Eagle! Our territory will be the area around the Clarksville Dam on the Mississippi river. Duvall's restaurant in Clarksville, Mo., will be the meeting place at 10 a. m. A 1½ hour drive from Clayton Courthouse, it is reached by following interstate 70 to St. Peters, and thence north on route 79.

After the bird count the W. B. Lammerts will offer hot coffee and a warm fire to the birders at their nearby farm.

Will those wishing to participate please contact Mrs. Chris Arhos, ME 1-3090. It should prove to be an exciting occasion.

Mr. J. McCune Dudley of Louisiana, Mo. and Mr. John Fisher of the Clarence Cannon Wildlife Refuge will meet us at Duvall's.

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# EIGHT-HOOTERS AND A SEVEN-HOOTER

By EDGAR ANDERSON

Really to appreciate the call of the barred owl, one has to hear it on a windless night and in a wooden building such as a barn or a shed. Under these circumstances when the owl hoots from a branch immediately above the roof (or from the ridgepole itself) it sounds even louder than when you are lying in your sleeping bag out-of-doors and the call comes from a tree overhead. The wooden structure, with no plaster to deaden it, serves as a sounding board for that most unearthly of all calls, "WHO-Hoo, Hoo-hoo; WHO-Hoo, HOO-HOOOOooooouh."

In the late nineteen thirties one of the males which we heard for two or three winters had a call which at the most never had over seven hoots. In its commonest form, instead of "WHO-Hoo, Hoo-hoo; WHO-Hoo, HOO-HOOOOooooouh" it was "WHO-Hoo, hoo-hoo; WHOO; HOO-HOOOOooooouh". It was both shorter and more broken. Though my ear is not very good, the call sounded to me as if it were also at a slightly different pitch.

When we learned to recognize this bird we referred to him as "Mr. Sevenhooter" and in the two or three years he was with us we learned a good deal about barred owl behavior that we had not undersood before we could distinguish one voice out of the two or three calling.

Our barn was set where a little stream had cut its way down to the flood plain; there was much higher land close to the river, upstream to the west and downstream to the east. We frequently would hear two owls calling up the river, one quite close, the other farther away. Downstream there were fewer big trees and less high land; we seldom heard more than one owl in that direction.

Our best performance was given during the winter that Mr. Sevenhooter called from downstream and various Eight-hooters from upstream. It began with a good strong call from an owl upstream in the middle distance and a slightly fainter call from Mr. Sevenhooter downstream and presumably a little farther away. There were two or three such interchanges, then a silence of about five minutes. Then the Eight-hooter called from upstream, but much closer to the barn and, of course, much louder. This was followed almost immediately by Mr. Sevenhooter who had also moved in closer but was still a little down stream from us. There was then quite a period when taunts were interchanged which was followed by complete silence both up-river and down.

When the silence was broken, both owls were apparently in the same tree and were directly in line between the barn and the river. There was one interchange of eight and of seven hoots, close to the normal pattern; then there was pandemonium for about ten minutes. There was almost continuous hooting and squawking in which the difference between the two voices was apparent, even when the hoots or squawks overlapped. There would be short periods of silence, then the clicking and slapping of powerful wings used in combat. The bird voices became more and more raucous. If any bird can really snarl, it is a barred owl when he gets in an argument. Then they quieted down to a few minor squawks and short hoots, and all was silence.

Later that winter we heard Mr. Sevenhooter again. He was now calling from in front of the barn to a little way down the river. There were answering calls from up the river but none of them moved any closer. Evidently he had won the argument. In other years we heard two barred owls fighting. One time the fight took place in an open-topped sycamore which was within a few feet of the barn. It was a shorter fight but horrible to listen to and none of us got back to sleep until it was all over.

# ST. LOUIS AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Orchard Farm, Mo. (all points within a 15 mile diameter circle, center Orchard Farm.) Along Mississippi River all on Missouri side, approximately same territory as covered last year: bottomlands and sloughs 75%, tilled fields 25%. January 1; 7:05 a. m. to 4:45 p. m., cloudy and misty; temperature 46 degrees to 52 degrees; wind sse, 3-17 m.p.h.; ground wet and bare, waters unfrozen. Fourteen observers in 2 parties. Total party-hours, 17 (15 on foot, 2 by car) total party miles 65 (9 on foot, 56 by car). Mallard, 5521; black duck, 5; gadwall, 7; baldpate, 1; pintail, 36; green-winged teal, 6; shoveler, 13; lesser scaup, 21; com. goldeneye, 6; red-tailed hawk 20 (including 1 western subspecies); bald eagle, 1; marsh hawk, 4; sparrow hawk, 14; bobwhite, 3; pheasant, 6; coot, 42; killdeer, 8; herring gull, 1; ring-billed gull, 638; mourning dove, 82; barred owl, 1; kingfisher, 2; flicker, 11; pileated woodpecker, 2; red-bellied woodpecker, 11; red-headed woodpecker, 41; hairy woodpecker, 2; downey woodpecker, 6; horned lark, 103; crow, 11742; blackcapped chickadee, 3; titmouse, 5; white-breasted nuthatch, 2; brown creeper, 1; Car. wren, 2; mockingbird, 2; robin, 465; cedar waxwing, 123; shrike, 3; starling, 2389; myrtle warbler, 3; house sparrow, 478; European tree sparrow, 169; eastern meadowlark, 131; western meadowlark, 2; red-winged blackbird, 27; grackle, 29; cardinal, 110; goldfinch, 8, LeConte' sparrow, 1; slat-colored junco, 23; tree sparrow, 64; field sparrow, 2; white-crowned sparrow, 10; white-throated sparrow, 21; song sparrow, 25; Lapland longspur, 17. Total 59 species (1 additional race) about 22,495 individuals. Participants, Dick Anderson, Kathryn Arhos, Paul Bauer, Alberta Bolinger, Bob Dwyer, Earl Comfort (compiler), Peg Feigley, Joan Harper, Earl Hath, Mr. and Mrs. Joel Massie, Lorli Nelson, Donald (Ducky) Holmes, Dave Rennecamp, Sally Vasse, Eugene Wilhelm Jr. (St. Louis Audubon Society). Seen in count period, but not on count day: dickcissel observed at close range Fide, Dick Anderson.

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## ST. LOUIS AUDUBON BULLETIN

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